

॥ श्री हरी ॥

Nal-Damayanti



Gita Press, Gorakhpur

Nal-Damayanti

tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
tvameva bandhushcha sakha tvameva
tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva

Translated by: –Shree Narayan Pandey

Editor

Jaydayal Goyandka

Gita Press, Gorakhpur

Humble Submission

It is said for Vedvyasji—Without four mouths, Lord Vedvyasji is Brahma, he is two-handed another Vishnu and bereft of third eye on forehead, he is Shankar. That means he appears as Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh integrated. Whatever benedictory writings are there in the world, are relics of Vedvyasji. For the redemption of all beings, Vedvyasji has scripted the scripture, Mahabharat. Such Mahabharat has been abridged by God-realised great devotee of God, Sethji Sri Jayadayalaji Goyandaka. Thus, originative of Vedvyasji and abridged by Sethji, few stories from Mahabharat, useful for human folks, have been selected. These stories have special power which will prove much beneficial to its readers.

The story of Nal-Damayanti is presented to our esteemed readers. My earnest request to the readers is that they ought read themselves and inspire others also to read.

— *Swami Ramasukhdas*

Contents

1. Story of Nal-Damayanti	5
2. Damayanti's Swayamvar and Wedding	6
3. Malevolence of Kaliyug, defeat of Nal in the gambling and his exile from the city..	14
4. Abandonment of Damayanti by Nal, escaping through the crisis. Having Vision of the divine sages Damayanti's dwelling in the palace of Subahu	19
5. The Disguise of Nal, To work as a charioteer of Rituparn, Search of Nal-Damayanti by Bhim and location of Damayanti	27
6. Nal's search, Rituparn's Vidarb-journey, Kaliyug's going out	33
7. King Nal's trial by Damayanti, identification, union, regaining of kingship and conclusion of the story	39
8. Maxims	48



॥ Shri Hari ॥

Story of Nal-Damayanti

The reverent chanting of Karkotak, Cobra king, Damayanti, Nal, Rituparn, the great king is destroyer of the Kaliyug's evil influence.

When the great soul Arjuna went away to the heaven (abode of Indra) to obtain weapons, the Pandavas were staying in the Kamyak forest. They were in great remorse and feeling perturbed due to the separation from Arjuna and ruin of the Empire. It is related that one day, Pandavas and Draupadi were talking about this. The king Yudhishtir was just consoling Bhimsen, at the sametime, the great sage Vrihadashwa was seen coming to their hermitage.

Seeing the sage Vrihadashwa coming, the righteous Yudhishtir moving onward, greeted and offered him a seat, worshipped with due respect. After his rest, Yudhishtir began to relate his concern. He stated—‘Your Majesty! Under the fraudulent plan, calling me, the Kauravas gambled and having defeated an innocent man like me by foul means and thus, grabbed all my possessions. Not only this, dragging my beloved Draupadi, they humiliated her in the open assembly. At last, they sent us wrapped in black deer skin to the dense forest. O the sage! You, please tell us, who is more unfortunate king then I? Have you ever heard or seen anywhere such a grieved one?’

The sage Vrihadashwa said—O Dharmaraj! Your assertion that no such grieved king was ever born, is not correct; because I know about a king more distressed and unfortunate than you. If you so desire, I should narrate.

On the insistence of the virtuous king Yudhishtir, the sage Vrihadashwa started narrating.

Damayanti's Swayamvar and Wedding

O Dharmaraj! A king, named Nal, son of Virsen has happened to be in Nishadh state. He was endowed with many virtues, very handsome, truthful, master of his senses, near and dear to all, conversant with the Vedas and a great devotee of the Brahmins. He had a huge defence force. He himself was very expert in ballistics. He was gallant, combatant and fierce vigorous too. He was also fond of gambling to some extent. In those days, a king, named Bhim ruled in Vidarbh state. Similarly to Nal, he too, was vigorous and endowed with all the virtues. Having pleased the sage Daman, he had—four issues, three sons and one daughter by his blessing. The names of the sons were Dam, Dant and Daman. The daughter's name was—Damayanti. Damayanti was extremely beautiful like goddess Lakshmi. Her eyes were large and charming. No girl among the gods and demigods was ever seen so beautiful as Damayanti. Those days a number of people came from Vidarbh to Nishadh estate and described the unparalleled beauty and virtues of Damayanti before king Nal. Also those, who visited Vidarbh from Nishadh, praised the handsome personality, virtues and pious character of the king Nal before Damayanti. It sprouted mutual emotion of love in the hearts of the both.

One day, the king Nal saw some swans in the garden of his palace. He caught hold of a swan. The swan said—‘if you set me free, we will approach Damayanti and there we will narrate the virtuous qualities of your personality in such a way that she will be spell-bound and select you mentally and whole heartedly. Nal released the swan. All of

the swans flew to Vidarbh state. Damayanti was very much delighted to see the swans close to her and rushed towards them to hold. Whenever Damayanti, moved to catch any of the swan, he came to utter—‘O Damayanti! there is a king, named Nal in the country Nishadh. He is handsome like Ashwinikumar. There is none among the mankind on the earth so handsome as he. He is as if the manifestation of cupid. If you become his wife, your coming in to life and your beauty will be proved fruitful. We have seen gods, demigods, mankind, serpents and demons all, wandering here and there but nowhere we could find even a glimpse of anyone so handsome as Nal. As you are the gem among the females, similarly Nal is a jewel among males. The pair of the both of you will be matchless.’ Damayanti instructed—‘Swan! Repeat in the same way about me before Nal. Returning to Nishadh, the swans conveyed the message of Damayanti to Nal.

Having heard the glory of the king Nal through the swans, Damayanti began to love him. Her infatuation increased so much that her mind remained absorbed in his contemplation day and night. She became feeble and looked dim. She began to look miserable. Grasping the feelings of Damayanti's inner-self, her friends urged the king of Vidarbh ‘Your daughter has become unwell.’ The king Bhim pondered seriously about his daughter. At last, he came to the decision that his daughter has become marriageable, so he should arrange Swayamvar. He sent the invitation card to all the kings to participate in Swayamvar and informed them that they should take advantage by participating and fulfill his desire. The kings of different countries reverberating the

earth with the acoustic intensity of their elephants, horses and chariots, having well dressed themselves, began to reach the Vidarbh State. Bhim made the proper arrangement for their welcome and respect.'

The news of Damayanti's Swayamvar reached the gods also through Sage Narad and Sage Parvat. Lord Indra and all other gods set out with their own team and vehicles to Vidarbh state. The king Nal's mind had already been attached to Damayanti. He also started his journey for Vidarbh to join Damayanti's suitor's assembly. While landing from the heaven, the gods happened to see that Nal, handsome like cupid, was on his way to attend the suitors assembly for Damayanti. Even the gods were bewildered to see his luster like sun and supra-mundane riches of beauty. They recognised that he was Nal. They parked their aeroplanes in the sky and landing down, said to Nal—'O the lord of king, Nal! You are quite truthful. please, become our messenger to help us' Nal took the vow and gave his consent, 'I will do'. Then, he enquired—'who are you and what duty do you want to allot me as a messenger?' Lord Indra said—'We are gods. I am Indra, and they are Fire God. Neptune and the angel of Death (Yama) respectively. We have come here for Damayanti. Go to Damayanti as our messenger and convey her our message that Indra, Neptune, fire God and Lord Yama (the angel of death) want to wed you coming here. Accept anyone among these gods as your husband.'

Nal requested with folded hands—'O the Lord of gods! Here all of you and I have the same purpose to go there. So, it is not proper to send me there as messenger. One who has already mentally chosen a maiden as his wife,

can never sacrifice her. How can he give up her and how can he, himself, convey her such a message? Please, pardon me for not doing this job.' The lords asserted—'Nal! You have already given us word to work for us. Now don't break your vow. Go there at once without delay. Nal said—'There is continuous strict guarding in the Royal Palace. How will I be able to go there'? The Lord Indra said—'Go, your access will be possible there.' By order of the Lord Indra, Nal, having entered the palace without let and saw Damayanti. Damayanti and her maid friends too, became stunned seeing him there. They were charmed to see this peerless handsome man and feeling shy, they could not utter at all.

Controlling herself, Damayanti told to king Nal—'Gallant! You look extremely handsome and innocent, first, give me your introduction, what is your motive to come here and why did the guards not watch you while entering?' My father punishes them severely at a slight slip in their duty.' Then, Nal explained—'O August lady! I am Nal. I have come here to approach you as a messenger of the protectors of the realms of the world. O the beauty Princess! Lord Indra, the Fire god, Neptune, and Yama—all these four Gods wish to marry you. Select any one of the gods as your husband. I have come to you with this very message. It was only influence of these gods that I entered your palace, none could visualize me. I have delivered the message of gods. Now, act upon as you wish. Having made obeisance to the gods, Damayanti spoke to Nal with veneration in a dim smile—'O the great king! Look at me lovingly and order me what services in my capacity should I render to

you. My Lord! I have surrendered myself and all my possessions at your feet. Bestow your love upon me with confidence. Since the day I heard the swans narrating about you, I have been yearning for you. It is only for your sake I have organized the gathering of the kings. If you dishonour the prayer of such devoted maid like me, I will end my life by taking poison, burning in fire or drowning into water or by hanging myself for your love sake”.

The king Nal stated—when the big protectors of the realms of the world are eager to marry you, then why are you longing for an earthly man like me? I am not even parallel to the dust of their feet. You fix your mind only upon them. Man dies by displeasing the gods. Protect me and select one of them. Hearing the version of Nal, Damayanti got scared. Tears rolled down of her both the eyes. She started saying—‘I am choosing you as my husband having made obeisance to all the gods. I am taking this true oath. At that moment Damayanti’s body was quivering and her hands were folded.

The king Nal said—‘Alright! You do so. But, do tell me that I have come as their messenger to deliver you the message and if I try to serve my own interest at this time, what a great fault it is! I can fulfill my interest only when it is not against morality. You should also do so.’ Damayanti uttered the voice in choked emotion—‘O the king! There is a righteous way. If you perform your job accordingly, you will not be blamed. That way is that you should come with all the gods to the marriage hall of the suitors. I will select you before them. Then, you will not be blamed.’ Now the king Nal came to the gods. On the inquiry of gods he


said—‘I obeyed your order by approaching Damayanti in her palace. On the gate the old guards were at watch, but they did not see me because of your power. Only Damayanti and her maiden friends saw me. They were astonished. I described about all of you in detail before Damayanti, but she is bent upon selecting me as her husband instead of choosing anyone from you as her husband. She has directed that all the divine beings along with you should join the Swayamvar. I will choose you before them. You will not be at fault then. I have narrated the entire episode as it is before all of you. your word is final now.’

The king Bhim fixed the auspicious moment for the Swayamvar and sent the call to the people. All the kings, coming from their respective residences began to occupy their seats in the marriage hall of the suitors. The assembly became full with the kings. When all had occupied their respective seats, bewitching the eyes and mind of the kings by the splendour of tints of her body, she appeared in the pavilion. The introduction of the kings started. Damayanti began to move onward casting her look on each, one by one. At a distance five kings identical to Nal in personality, size, dress, look and appearance, were sitting together at the same place. Damayanti found herself in a fix. She could not distinguish the king Nal. Whomsoever she saw, he looked as Nal. So, she began to contemplate how to recognize king Nal—How to know him? She felt very sad. At last Damayanti decided to go to the shelter of the gods. With folded hands saluting them reverently, began to pray—O God! Having heard about Nal from the swans, I have selected him as my husband. I want none else but only Nal by mind and

speech. The gods have authorized and approved only the king of Nishadh—Nal as my husband and I have started this vow only for the adoration of Nal. On the strength of this truthful oath, may the Divine beings guide me to distinguish him! O the auspicious Divine beings! Kindly, unmask your real forms so that I may recognize the holy King—Nal.’ The Gods heard this pathetic wail of Damayanti. Realizing her firm determination, true love, innate purity, wisdom, devotion and her concentrated dedication to Nal, they empowered her to differentiate gods and man. Damayanti marked that there was no sweat on the body of the gods. Their eyelids were constant and not blinking. The flower garlands of their neck were not faded, there was no trace of dirt on their bodies, they were sitting on the royal throne but their feet were not touching the earth and their shadow was not visible. On the other side the shadow of Nal’s body was clearly visible. There were some particles of dirt and sweat also on his body. His eyelids were continuously blinking and his feet were touching the earth. Because of these symptoms, Damayanti identified gods and the holy king Nal. Then according to the holy custom she selected Nal as her husband. Feeling a bit shy, she drew the veil and put the auspicious garland around the neck of Nal. The gods and sages began to shout—‘Excellent, Well done!’ The cry of distress broke out among the kings.

The King Nal felicitated Damayanti with boundless joy. He said—“You have selected me instead of gods inspite of their presence here, so consider me your husband wholly devoted to your love. I will always comply to your advice. I will continue loving you so long as I remain

alive—I promise this to you by true oath”. Having greeted each other in the bond of love, they sought the shelter of Divine beings as Lord Indra etc. The gods, too, were highly pleased. They granted eight boons to Nal. Lord Indra blessed—‘Nal! You will have a sight of mine in the yajna sacrifice and get salvation. The fire-God blessed—‘Wherever you recollect me, I will appear then and there and you will attain luminous realm as that of mine’. Lord yama (The Angel of death) granted the bliss—‘The meal prepared by you, will be delicious and tasty beyond the measure and you will remain resolute in religion’. Naptune said—‘Water will come out wherever you will wish, your garland will continuously remain brimful with sweet fragrance.’ Thus, all the Gods having granted two boons each, went away to their respective worlds. The invited kings also bade farewell and departed. Being filled with immense joy, the king Bhim ceremonised the marriage function of Damayanti with Nal in accordance with the precepts of Shastras. The king Nal stayed for some days at Kundinpur, the capital of Vidarbha state. Thenafter by seeking the permission of Bhim, Nal accompanied by his wife, Damayanti, returned back to his own capital. The king Nal, nourished his subjects in his capital in a righteous way. The name ‘king’ was proved meaningful in reality by him. He performed many sacrifices with philanthropic motive, as Vedic Horse-sacrifice etc. In the due course of time, one son, named Indrasen and daughter named Indrasena were born of Damayanti.



Malevolence of the Kaliyug, Defeat of Nal in the Gambling and his Exile from the city

The sage Vrihadashwa continues—‘Yudhishthir! While returning from the Assembly of Damyanti’s suitors Swayamvar and going to their own realms, Lord Indra and other gods met Kaliyug and Dwapar on the way. Lord Indra asked — ‘Kaliyug! where were you going?’ Kaliyug replied — ‘I am going to Damayanti’s Swayamvar to marry her.’ The Lord Indra remarked smiling — ‘But, that purpose of suitors assembly (Swayamvar) is already over! Damayanti selected the king Nal ‘and we remained on-lookers only. Being furious with rage, Kaliyug said — ‘Oh! It was very unjust! Having ignored gods, she chose a human being. So she deserves to be punished. Gods said — ‘with our due permission Damayanti has selected Nal. Actually, Nal is endowed with all the virtues and is quite worthy of her choice. He knows the essence of religion and bears a moral character. He has studied History-mythology as well as Vedas. He appeases the gods in the performance of the sacrifice, he never oppresses anybody, he is truthful and of firm-mind. His sharpness of mind, patience, knowledge and wisdom, penance, purity, serenity, self-control are just like the divine beings. To curse him is equal to fall down in the blazing fire of the Hell. Having said so the gods went away.

Now Kaliyug conversed with Dwapar—‘Brother! I cannot cool my anger. So I will dwell in the body of Nal. I will dethrone him. Then, he will not be able to live with Damayanti. So, you please assist me by entering the dices of the gambling.’ Dwapar accepted his request. Dwapar and Kaliyug, both came to Kingdom of Nal and stayed

there. They kept on waiting for twelve years to find any fault in Nal's character. One day, Nal sat for evening prayer without washing his feet after passing urine. Seeing him impure, Kaliyug entered his body. Simultaneously, disguising himself in other form, he reached Pushkar and advised him—'Gamble with Nal and by my help having won the king Nal in gambling, you can attain the kingship of Nishadh state.' Consenting to his advice, Pushkar went to Nal. Dwapar, too assuming the form of dices accompanied him. When Pushkar insisted upon Nal again and again to gamble, the king Nal could not bear the repeated challenge of his brother. At the very moment he resolved to dice with Pushkar. At this, Kaliyug had already taken his entrance in the body of Nal, So the king Nal happened to lose gold, silver, chariot, means of transport etc., whatever he bet. The ministers and his subjects tried their best to stop the gambling with great anxiety personally approaching the king Nal and reaching the gate halted there. Being acquainted with their motive, the guard at the gate, went to the queen Damayanti and stated—'You, please, make an earnest request to the king that he is an expert in morality and economic policies, that his subjects are standing at the gate due to your unbearable misfortune. Damayanti, herself was losing her strength and consciousness due to the grief. With tears rolling down from her eyes, she made her prayer to the king in choked voice with emotion—"My Lord! The loyal subjects of the state and your cabinet ministers have come to meet you and they are standing at the threshold. Kindly, meet them." But being under the sway of Kaliyug, Nal paid no heed.' The ministers of the cabinet and the subjects returned with heavy and grieved heart. The gambling between Pushkar

and Nal continued for a number of months and Nal went on losing the game continuously. Whatever dice, the king Nal cast in the gambling, it always, went against him. His entire wealth passed on from his hold. When Damayanti came to know the fact, she called in the charioteer of the king Nal, named Varshneya through the wet-nurse, named Vrihatsena and said to him—Charioteer! You are dear to the king. Now, it is not hidden to you that the king has plunged himself into trouble. So, attach the horses to the chariot and having seated my both the children, take them away to Kundin city. You will let off the horses and chariot there itself. If you so desire, you may stay there. Otherwise, go to any other place. According to the instructions of Damyaiti and with the consent of the ministers, the charioteer escorted the children to Kundinpur and let off the chariot and horses also there and himself, walking on foot reached Ayodhya and began to work there as the charioteer of the king, Rituparn.

After the departure of the charioteer Varshneya, Pushkar took over the state and the entire wealth and property of the king Nal. Having addressed Nal ridiculing him he said—‘Will you bet for gamble any more? But you have nothing to put on as wager. If you think it proper to put Damayanti as wager, then again let the game be started. Nal’s heart began to burst. He remained quiet and said nothing to Pushkar. He put off all his dresses from his body and wrapped in a single cloth, came out of the city. Damayanti, too, in a single Sari, followed her husband. Nal’s friends, well-wishers and his kith and kins were much grieved. Nal and Damayanti, both stayed for three nights out of the city. Pushkar got it proclaimed by beat of drum that if anyone

offered any sympathy to Nal, he will be sentenced to death. Being afraid, the people of the city could not even show any hospitality to their king, Nal. The king Nal passed his three days and nights only drinking water near the city. The fourth day, they felt extremely hungry. Then having eaten some fruits-roots, both moved onward.

One day, king Nal noticed that a number of birds were just sitting near him. There was glow like gold in their feathers. The king Nal thought that he would get some riches from their feathers. Thinking so, Nal threw the wearing cloth of his body over them to catch them. The birds flew away with his cloth. Now the king Nal stood up naked in a pitiable state casting-down his face. The birds said—‘O stupid! You had started off the city wearing a single cloth. We were very much pained to see it. Now see, we are going taking the cloth of your body. We are not birds but the dices of the gambling. Nal disclosed the mystery of the dices to Damayanti.’

Thenafter Nal said—‘My beloved! You are marking, there are several routes here. This one goes to Awanti and the other one goes to the Southern countries passing through Rikshvan hill. Just in frontVindhyachala mountain exists. This Payoshni river merges into the ocean. These are the hermitages of the sages. This route in front goes to the Vidarbh state. This is the way that leads to Kausala.’ Thus, being tormented with misery and distress, the king Nal began to point out the different routes and hermitages very carefully to Damayanti. Damayanti’s eyes were filled with tears. She began to express herself in choked voice—‘Lord! What are you thinking? My limbs are becoming wearisome, my mind is perplexed and vexed. Your kingdom, your entire wealth and property everything has passed off

from your hold, even you are deprived of the wearing cloth to cover your body, you are tired, hungry and thirsty: may I go anywhere forsaking you here alone in the solitary forest in such a wretched situation? Accompanying you like your shadow, I will wipe out your sufferings. In the days of calamity, a wife is a medicinal herb for her husband. She lessens the intensity of sorrow by soothing him. Even the physicians, too, admit it'.

Nal said—'Darling! Your version is right. Wife is a friend, wife is a remedy. But I don't want to forsake you. Why are you having such doubt in your mind?' Damayanti uttered—'You don't want to give me up but why are you showing me the route to Vidarbha state? I am sure that you cannot give me up. Yet, at present your mind is perverted. That is why, I have become suspicious. Your guidance about the routes pricks my heart. If you want to send me to my paternal house or to any relative's house, undoubtedly it is right and I do agree but why not both of us go together. You should stay there happily. My father will welcome you with due regard.' Nal said—'Beloved! Your father is a king and I, too, was a king. At present I am in trouble and in such state I will not go to him.' The king Nal began to convince Damayanti. Thenafter both went on wandering in the forest covering their bodies with the same single cloth. Oppressed with hunger and thirst, they both approached an inn and stayed there.

Abandonment of Damayanti by Nal, Escaping through the crisis, having Vision of the divine sages, Damayanti's Dwelling In the palace of Subahu

Vrihadashwaji continues—Yudhishtir! At that time, there was no cloth on the body of king Nal, what to say more, there was not even a mat to spread on the ground. His body was smeared with dust. The torture and tormentation of hunger and thirst was in addition aside. The king Nal slept on the ground itself. Damayanti had not even dreamt of such a pitiable condition. She was delicate. The tender Damayanti also slept there. When Damayanti fell asleep, the king's sleep got dissipated. In fact his mind was so restless that it was not possible for him to take a sound sleep due to excess of sufferings. After awaking, the scene of being deprived of his kingdom, the relatives, his kiths and kins getting away from him and the birds flying away taking the cloth of his body, began to haunt him one by one. He began to ponder that—Damayanti loves him ardently. Due to her dedicated love merely she was suffering from such unbearable difficulties. In case, I leave her, she will go to her father's house. If she remains with me, she will have to face miseries in life only. If I leave her, it is possible that she may lead a happy life. At last, the king Nal decided that to leave her is good for Damyanati. Damayanti is truly chaste. No body can assail any harm to her chastity. Thus, having decided firmly to give up her, and being carefree from her in point of her chastity, the king, Nal thought that—‘I am naked and there is only a single cloth to cover

her body, even then it is better to tear out half of her cloth. But how to tear? Possibly, she may wake up. He began to walk here and there in the inn. Suddenly he noticed a naked dagger without scabbard. The king Nal lifted it and very slowly and silently torn away half of the cloth of her body, covered his own body. Damayanti was in sound sleep. The king Nal got out leaving her there. After a while, when he became cool-minded he came back again to the inn and seeing Damayanti, he began to weep thinking that—‘My beloved used to live behind the curtain in the gynaeceum of the palace till now, nobody could even touch her body. Today, wearing half of the cloth she is sleeping in the dust like an orphan. How will she, overwhelmed with grief, wander in the forest without me? Beloved! you are a virtuous lady. So may the lord Sun, Vasu, Rudra, Ashwinikumar and the god-wind protect you!’ At that time king Nal’s heart was breaking into pieces because of agony. Again and again he got out of the inn and returned again like swinging rope. Due to the entrance of Kaliyug in his body, his reason had failed, so at last, leaving his beloved wife there in the forest alone, he went away therefrom.

When Damayanti got up from the sleep, she saw that the king Nal was not there, Being quite suspicious, she began to cry loudly—‘Your Majesty! My Lord! My all-self! Where you are? I am feeling terrorized alone, where did you get away? Now, don’t make more fuss my hard-minded lord! Why are you frightening me? Make haste to be visible. I am observing you. I have seen you. Why are you keeping mum, hidden behind the creepers? Just see! I noticed you! Being overpowered by grief, I am wailing so

bitterly and you don't even console me coming to me? Lord! I have no grief for myself or any other one. I am only worried how will you adjust yourself and survive staying alone in such a dense forest? O My master! Whosoever has caused to reach this pitiable condition to a noble soul like you, may he too, remain always more afflicted being overpowered by calamities and pass his life in misery!' Wailing in this way Damayanti began to rush up here and there. Making delirious expressions, roaming here and there, she reached before a python because of being bereaved, she could not be aware of it. The python began to engulf Damayanti. Even in that situation instead of worrying for herself, Damayanti remained worried about how would he (Nal) remain alone? She began to call out—'Lord! This python is engulfing me like a helpless creature, why don't you rush up to liberate me?' The sound of Damayanti was heard by a fowler. He was loitering about there. He rushed up there and seeing that the pythom was engulfing Damayanti, with his sharp weapon he cleaved the python's mouth. Having liberated Damayanti, he bathed her and assuring her, he caused her to take meal. Damayanti got pacified a little. The fowler, then, asked—'O the beautiful-queen! Who are you? What suffering and what motive has compelled you to come here?' Damayanti narrated her painful story. The matchless beauty of Damayanti, her pose and modulation, her style of speech, made the fowler infatuated with lust. He became passionate. By his sweet and lovely talk, he began to fascinate her to bring under his control. Reading the motive of the vile fowler, Damayanti got infuriated with rage, Damayanti tried her best to restrain the fowler's aggression

to rape her, but when he did not heed anyway, she cursed—‘If I have never even dreamt of any other man but the Nishadh king Nal by my mind, let this sinner and sinful, mean fowler fall down dead on the ground.’ Just the moment these words came out of Damayanti’s mouth, the fowler fell down on the ground like a burnt stump of a tree and expired.

After the death of the fowler, Damayanti happened to reach a solitary terrible forest searching for the king Nal. Observing different mountains, rivers, roaring big rivers, forest, violent animals, demons etc. and in the frenzy of anguish of the parting from her loved one, asking them whereabouts of the king Nal, she began to advance towards North. After passing three days and three nights, Damayanti saw that there was a beautiful sacred forest where ascetics performed austerities in the hermitage, abstinent, self-controlled, pious, ascetic and devoutly austere saints and sages like Vashistha, Bhṛigu and Atri were residing there. They had put on the barks of the trees or deer skin. Damayanti got some solace. Going to the hermitage, she saluted reverently and humbly to the saints and sages and stood with folded hands. Saying ‘Welcome to you’, the sages showed her hospitality and said—‘Take your seat. What should we do for you?’ Like a noble lady, Damayanti asked—‘Are all your penance, fire, religious merit and animals and birds well? Does there any obstacle occur in the performance of your religious duty?’ The sages said—‘O the harbinger of good luck and prosperity! We are all well here by all means. Who are you and what is your purpose of coming here? We are very much surprised. Are you the chief goddess of forest, mountain, river? Damayanti stated! I am

not any god or goddess, I am simply a human—lady. I am the daughter of Bhim, the king of Vidarbha. Wise, auspicious and gallant-victorious king of Nishadha Lord Nal is my husband. The expert of duplicity and vicious minded person, having prompted my virtuous husband to gamble, has taken away his kingship including his entire wealth and property. I am his wife—Damayanti. Unfortunately, he has been separated from me. I am going astray to and from forest to forest in search of such a warrior, expert in the science of arms and armours, saintly my husband. If I fail to see him very soon, I will not survive. Without him my life is fruitless. How long will I be able to bear the pangs of his separation?' The hermits said—'O the harbinger of good luck! We are viewing through power of spiritual pious eyes that you will enjoy comforts in near future and in a very short time you will see the king Nal. The virtuous king Nal will get rid of all the sufferings and will rule over the prosperous and rich Nisadha state. His enemies will be frightened, the friends and well wishers will be happy and the family members will be overjoyed to get him among themselves.' Thus, prophesying so, all the saints disappeared with their hermitage. Viewing this wonderful event, Damayanti got astonished. She began to contemplate that—'Oh! Have I seen this dream? Is it so? How it so happened. Where did the sages, hermitage, rivers with pious water, fruit-laden green trees and blossoms disappear? Damayanti again became sad and her face dispirited.

Getting out from the place, wailing Damayanti reached an Ashok tree. From her eyes drops of tears were falling incessantly. She begged to say to the Ashok tree in choked

voice—‘O bereft of sorrow, Ashok! Remove my sufferings. Have you seen the king Nal, devoid of anguish anywhere? Ashok! Prove your ‘grief-devastating name meaningful and true.’ Damayanti made the reverential circumambulation of Ashok and proceeded onward. Searching for the husband in the dense fierce forest, several trees, caves, peaks of mountains and near about the rivers, Damayanti went far away. There she saw a band of merchants with elephants, horses and chariots was moving ahead. Being assured and confident with the talk to the chief of the merchant group that the merchants were going to the king Subahu’s kingdom, Chedidesh, Damayanti accompanied them. Now craving for her husband’s vision in her mind was continuously increasing. After the journey of several days, the merchants reached an horrid forest. There was a charming pond. Due to long journey they were exhausted. So they made their halt there. Fortune was against them. In the night the wild elephants pounced upon the elephants of the merchants and in their stampede all the merchants were ruined. Hearing the uproar, Damayanti’s sleep got entirely dissipated. Seeing this sight of great disaster, she became demented. She had never seen such an incidence. Being frightened, she ran away from there and reached the place where a few survived persons were standing. Thenafter, with these reciters of the vedas and self-restrained Brahmins, who had been left safe from the horrible stampede, putting on half of the cloth of her body, began to pace with them and in the evening she reached the capital of the king of Chedi, Subahu.

At the time, when Damayanti was treading on the royal path of the capital, the citizens misunderstood her a crazy

woman. The small children began to chase her. Damayanti reached near the royal palace. At that time, the dowager queen was sitting at the window of the royal palace. While casting her glance at Damayanti, surrounded by the children, she asked the wet-nurse—‘Just do mark, this woman seems to be afflicted with sorrow. She is seeking any shelter for herself. The children are harassing her. You go, and bring her to me. She is so pretty that she will make the palace shine with glow.’ The wet-nurse obeyed the order. Damayanti came into the palace. Seeing the glowing beauty of Damayanti’s body, the dowager-queen asked—‘You look to be distressed by appearance, even then, how is your body so radiant? Tell me—who are you, whose wife are you? Why don’t you fear anyone even in the helpless condition?’ Damayanti answered—‘I am a woman dedicated and devoted to my husband. I do belong to a noble and high family but can perform the work of a maidservant. I have already lived in the gynaeceum. I pass my days and night staying anywhere and eating fruit-root. My husband is endowed with many virtues and he loves me also very ardently. It is my ill-fate that I don’t know where he got out at the dead of night leaving me asleep without my any fault. Day and night I am searching for my beloved husband and keep on burning in intense grief of his separation. While narrating her tragic story she could not check herself and tears overflowed from her eyes and she wept. The dowager queen was moved at the grieved wail of Damayanti. She began to say—‘O August lady! I am feeling the innate affection for you. You! Stay with me. I will manage to search your husband. When he comes, you meet him here

itself.' Damayanti uttered—'Mother I can stay here at your abode on a condition. Neither I will eat the food left over nor will I wash the feet of anyone and I will never talk to any other male member regarding anything. If any person makes lewd advances towards me, he must be punished. If he repeats such advances again and again, he will have to be sentenced to death even. I will continue talking to the Brahmins regarding the search of my husband. If you accept my condition, then only I can stay here with you otherwise not.' The dowager queen was very much pleased hearing the moral rules of Damayanti and she assured Damayanti that it would be so. Thenafter, she called her daughter, Sunanda and instructed her—'Daughter! treat this maidservant as a goddess. She is of your age group (equal to you in age), so keep her in the palace like your girlfriend and continue to entertain yourself with her gladly.' Sunanda took away Damayanti to her palace with pleasure. Damayanti began to live in the palace observing the rules of morality as stipulated by her.

The Disguise of Nal, To work as a charioteer of Rituparn, Search of Nal-Damayanti by Bhim and location of Damayanti

Vrihadashwaji continues—‘Yudhishtir ! when the king Nal proceeded onward leaving Damayanti asleep, the forest conflagration was there at that moment. Nal stood still, abruptly he heard a voice knocked at his ear—king Nal! rush up without losing time and save me! Nal said—‘Don’t be afraid. Making haste he entered the forest conflagration and he found there Karkotak, the king-cobra formed into a coil, was lying. He prayed with folded hands to Nal—‘O king! I am a cobra named Karkotak. I had deceived the glorious sage, Narad. He cursed me that until the king Nal lifts you up, remain lying here. Having been lifted up by him, you will get rid of the curse. Due to his curse I cannot move even a step. Protect me from the curse, I will disclose you the mystery to your interest and become your close friend. Don’t be afraid of my heavy weight. Just now I will be very light. He changed himself and became equal to a thumb’. Nal, having lifted, took him out of the forest-conflagration. Karkotak said—‘O the king! Don’t put me on the earth still walk a few steps counting numbers.’ As soon as the king put his tenth step on the ground and pronounced as ‘Dus’-(ten), Karkotak, the king cobra bit him. It was his principle that if anyone says ‘Dus’ means Daso (bite) only then he bites otherwise not. The moment

Karkotak bit, earlier face of Nal got changed and so also Karkotak came into his own real shape. He said to the amazed king Nal—‘O the king! I have changed your form so that none would recognize you. Kaliyug has caused you severe sufferings, now by the effect of my poison he will remain extremely tormented in your body. You have protected me. Now you will have no fear at all from any violent animal-bird, enemy and the curses of Divine souls etc., rather to say, none of the above can assail any harm to you. Now you will have no effect of any kind of poison and in the war you will always be winner. Now change your name as—‘Bahuk’ and go to Ayodhya, the city of king Rituparn — an expert in gambling. You impart him the knowledge of horse-skill and he will reveal you the secret of gambling and he will also become your good friend and well-wisher. Having acquainted with the trick of gambling, you will get back your wife, daughter, son, your kingdom and every thing. Whenever you will wish to assume your original form, recollect me and wear the cloth given by me and you will again come to your original form’. Having instructed so, Karkotak handed over him two divine attires and disappeared.

Having set out on his journey, the king Nal reached Ayodhaya, the capital of Rituparn on the tenth day. He appealed in the royal court that—‘My name is Bahuk. My profession is to drive the horses and train them in different types of gait. There is none on the earth so expert and skilled in the science of horses as I. I give my valuable advice in the serious financial matters and on different other

serious problems, and I am very clever and expert in cooking and I will try my best to perform all the works of manual skill and other difficult works. Please, appoint me fixing my remuneration for living.' Rituparn said—'Bahuk! It is good that you have come. All these works will be your responsibility. But I prefer speedy horsemanship. So, make such an effort as the gait of my horses may be fast. I appoint you as the chief of the stable. You will get ten thousand gold-coins per month. In addition to it, Varshneya (the old charioteer of Nal) and Jivala will remain always present before you. Keep on staying in my royal court. Having been received much honour by Rituparn, the king Nal in the name of Bahuk began to live in Ayodhya with Varshneya and Jivala. Remembering Damayanti daily in the night the king Nal used to say—'Oh! austere, Damayanti being perplexed with hunger and thirst, and being tired and exhausted you will be remembering me that stupid fellow and I don't know where will you be sleeping? Just to think, where and to whom will she be going for her livelihood? In the same way, thinking about many other things he lived near Rituparn in such a way as no body might recognize him.'

When the Vidarbh king, Bhim came to know this news that his son-in-law Nal, having been dethroned gone out in the forest with his daughter, he called the Brahmins giving them sufficient money, instructed them that—'Going everywhere on the earth findout Nal-Damayanti and bring them having searched out. The Brahmin, who fulfils this task, will be given one lakh cows and landed property. If you fail to bring them, and simply provide me their address

of location, even then you will be rewarded with ten thousand cows. The Brahmins set out in search of Nal and Damayanti very happily.

The Brahmin, named Sudev went to the capital of the king of Chedi to search out Damayanti. One day he saw Damayanti in the royal palace. At that time in the palace of the king, the auspicious recitation was going on and sunanda and Damayanti sitting together side by side, were watching the auspicious function. Seeing Damayanti, the Brahmin, Sudev thought that—‘Actually, it is she, the daughter of Bhim. She looks the same in appearance even today as I had seen her in the past. I find no change in her form. It happened very well. My journey got fruitful seeing her, Sudev approached Damayanti and said—‘O the daughter of king of Vidarbh! I am the Brahmin Sudev, the friend of your brother. I have come here in your search by the order of the king Bhim. Your mother-father and brother are quite well. Your both the children are also very well in Vidarbh. The agony of your parting has made your family members practically lifeless and hundreds of Brahmins are wandering on the earth to search you. Damayanti recognized the Brahmin. She began to ask about the well being of all one by one and while asking, she started weeping. Sunanda got perturbed to see Damayanti weeping while talking and going to her mother, she narrated all about her. The dowager queen at once, came out of the gynaeceum and going to the Brahmin began to enquire as to whose wife was she and who was her father and how had she been seperated from her family members? How did you recognize

her?' Sudev related the whole story of Nal-Damayanti and said that as the fire hidden in the ashes is traced by its heat, I have recognized this goddess by her charming appearance and her forehead. Sunanda washed the forehead of Damayanti with her own hands and by which the red sign between eye-brows appeared like moon. Seeing the naevus on her forehead, sunanda as well as the dowager queen both wept. For fortyeight minutes she kept on clasping her to her bosom. The dowager queen said—'Damayanti! by this naevus of your forehead I have come to recognize you that you are the daughter of my own sister. Your mother is my own sister. Both of us are the daughters of Sudama, the king of Dasharna state. You were born at the very house of my father. At that time I had seen you. Just as your father's house is yours, this very house is yours also, this property, as it belongs to me, the same way, it belongs to you also. Damayanti was very much delighted Having saluted her aunt reverently she said—'Mother! It does not matter if you did not recognize me? Really, I did live here like a daughter. You have fulfilled my all desires and protected me as well. I have no doubt that I will live here more comfortably in the coming days. But I have been loitering for a long time. My two minor children are at my father's house. They would be feeling very much distressed because of the separation from their father. God knows what would be their condition? If you want to favour me by doing something in my interest, then fulfill my desire by sending me to Vidarbh state.' The dowager queen was pleased very much. She caused to send for the palanquin through her son. Having provided food,

dressess and different other articles, under the protection of a big troop of army bade farewell to Damayanti. In the Vidarbh state Damayanti was greeted warmly. Damayanti met her brother, the children, her mother, father and her female friends. She worshipped gods and Brahmins. The king felt boundless joy having received her. He gifted one lakh cows, landed property and money to the Brahmin, named Sudev and satisfied him fully.

Nal's search, Rituparn's Vidarbh-journey, Kaliyug's going out

Vrihadashwa continues—‘Yudhishtir! Having taken rest for one day at her father's house, Damayanti said to her mother—‘My mother! I tell you the truth. If you want to see me alive, kindly do something for the search of my husband. Being very much pathetic, the queen said to her husband,’ the king, Bhim—‘My master! Damayanti is quite impatient for her husband. warding off hesitation, she has expressed her worry to me that we should find out some way to search him out.’ The king called in the Brahmins, dependent on him and deputed them to search out Nal. Approaching Damayanti the Brahmins said—‘Now we are setting out to search out Nal.’ Damayanti instructed the Brahmins—‘Whichever state you visit, you must speak at any crowded place—‘My beloved trickster’ having torn half of my ‘Sari’ and leaving me asleep in the forest, where did you escape away? Your orderly wife, dedicated to you, still in the same condition wrapped in the half of the ‘Sari’, is waiting for you anxiously and burning on the anguish and pangs of your separation.’ You will sketch the true picture of my condition before them and describe my condition in such a way as may please him to favour me with his kindness. On the description of my condition, if any body gives any response to you and replies something, find out who is he, where does he live, remember the relevance of these words and quote their replies before me keeping it in your mind. Be careful and mind it that you are uttering these words by

my order,' let it not be known to him.' A band of Brahmins set out in search of Nal according to the instructions given by Damayanti.

After searching for a long time, the Brahmin, named Parnad, coming into the palace, said to Damayanti - 'Princess! I happened to reach Ayodhya searching out the king of Nishadh, Nal, according to your instructions. There I reached the king Rituparn and in the open crowded royal session I repeated your uttered sentences. But no body answered there. When I was leaving, his charioteer, named Bahuk, having taken me to a lonely place, said something. O noble Princess! That charioteer trains the horses of Rituparn, prepares very delicious food; but his hands are small and his body is ugly. Taking a long breath and weeping he said—"In spite of being overwhelmed by calamities, the noble ladies protect their chastity and by the power of their chastity, attain heaven. If ever the husband abandons her, she is not enraged and contrary to it, she maintains her moral and good conduct. Due to being in the grip of adversities, the person who abandoned her was feeling agonised and was unconscious. Hence it is not proper to lose temper against him. It is true that the husband did not give his wife due respect, but he was, at that time devoid of kingship and royal wealth, oppressed with hunger, sad and surrounded by calamities. In such a condition it does not behove to be angry with him. When he was longing for livelihood to save his life, the birds flew away with his wearing cloth. The pain of his mind was unbearable." O the princess! Hearing these words of Bahuk, I have come to narrate it before you. Do, as you think proper. If you

wish, you may convey it to the majesty also.

Hearing the words of the Brahmin, Damayanti's eyes were filled with tears. She said to her mother in a lonely place—'My respected mother! Please, don't disclose this story to my father, I am appointing the Brahmin, Sudev for the task. As, Sudev had managed an auspicious moment to reach me here, in same way looking for good omen, he should find out the way to bring my husband here.' Then after paying due obeisance to Parnad, Damayanti bade him farewell and called in Sudev. Damayanti said to Sudev 'O venerable Brahmin! As soon as possible having visited Ayodhya city convey this to Rituparn that Damayanti willingly wants to select her husband again in Swayamvar. Great kings and princes are going there to participate. The day of the Swayamvar has been fixed for tomorrow itself. So, if you can reach there, please go. It is not known to anyone about the death and survival of Nal, so, she will select another husband at sunrise. Hearing the version of Damayanti, Sudev went to Ayodhya and he conveyed the entire matter to Rituparn.

Hearing the Brahmin Sudev's words, the king Rituparn called in Bahuk and made him understand in very sweet voice and then said—'Bahuk! Tomorrow Damayanti is going to select her husband from among the suitors in the Swayamvar. I want to reach Vidarbha state in a single day. But I will go there only when you think it is possible to reach there so soon. Hearing the words of Rituparn, Nal's heart began to break. He thought that—Damayanti must have taken this decision in a senseless state due to sufferings. It is also possible, she might be willing to do so. But not so

at all! She must have adopted this device as a means to get me. She is a faithful and chaste wife, devoutly austere and pitiable. Due to perverted sense, I have done great cruelty to abandon her. It is my fault. She can never do so. However, what is truth and what is false, can be known only after reaching there. But there lies my interest also in fulfilling Rituparn's desire. With folded hands Bahuk said that—'I assure you by oath to do the job as per your instruction.' going in to the stable, Bahuk tested four superior and high speedy horses, and Nal harnessed them to his chariot. The king Rituparn mounted on the chariot.

Just like the birds flying through the sky, the chariot of Bahuk began to cross over the rivers, mountains and forests in a very short time. On the way at some place, the scarf of the king Rituparn fell down. He asked Bahuk—'Stop the chariot, let me get it lifted by Varshneya and get it through him. Nal said—your scarf has fallen down just now but we have passed about ten kilometers ahead from there. Now it cannot be lifted. In the meanwhile, the conversation was going on, the chariot was passing through a forest. Rituparn said—'Bahuk! Just mark my skill of the mathematical knowledge. In the front trees whatever the fruits and leaves are visible, in its comparison, the fruits and leaves fallen on the ground are one hundred one times more in number. On both the branches and twigs of this tree five crores of leaves and two thousand ninety-five fruits are there. If you want, you may count.' Bahuk stopped the chariot and said that—'I will admit after having cut this Belleric myrobalan tree and having counted its fruits and leaves carefully.' Bahuk did so. The fruits and leaves were exactly the same in

number that had been told by the king. Nal was astonished. Bahuk said—‘Your knowledge is wonderful. Please teach me this science. Rituparn said—‘like the mathematics-knowledge I am expert in the knowledge of dices too.’ Bahuk requested—‘kindly teach me the science of this skill, then, I will impart you the knowledge of the Horse-skill; Rituparn was in a haste to reach Vidarbh state and there was eagerness also to have the knowledge of the horses’ skill, so he taught Nal the skill of dices and said—‘you will teach me the skill of horses lateron. I have left it as a trust with you.’

The moment, the king Nal learnt the science of dices, at the same moment Kaliyug, spitting out the pungent poison of Karkotak cobra got out of Nal’s body. On the exit of Kaliyug out of his body, Nal flew into a rage and he desired to curse him. With folded hands, trembling with fear, Kaliyug began to pray—‘kindly, pacify your anger. I will make you glorious. At that time, when you had abandoned Damayanti, she had cursed me at the very moment. I stayed in your body with terrible pain being burnt by the impact of the Karkotak-cobra’s poison I am in your shelter, kindly, listen to my prayer and don’t curse me. One who chants your pious character, will not be afraid of me. The king Nal pacified his anger. Being afraid, Kaliyug entered the ‘Belleric myrobalan’ (Bahera) tree. No one except Nal and Kaliyug knew this conversation. That tree turned as a stump.

Thus, Kaliyug ceased pursuing the king Nal, but still, his form was not changed. He drove his chariot speedily and reached Vidarbh by the fall of evening. The news was

sent to the king, Bhim. He invited Rituparn to him. By the gingling of the chariot of Rituparn all the directions were sounded. Also the horses of the king Nal remained there at Kundin city as they had come carrying his children. They recognized the king Nal by the rattling sound of the chariot and they felt delighted as in the past. This sound made Damayanti also to feel alike. Damayanti began to say—
‘The rattling sound of the chariot creates exhilaration in my mind and heart, undoubtedly, the driver of this chariot is none else but my beloved husband. If he does not come to me today, I will jump in the blazing fire. I don’t remember whether I have ever told him anything untrue even in joke, ever have I caused him any harm or have I broken any vow pledged to him. He is gallent, forgiving, brave, benefactor and faithful to his wife. My heart is breaking into pieces due to his separation. Damayanti climbing up the roof of the palace began to stare at the arrival of the chariot and charioteer’s mounting down from the chariot.

King Nal's trial by Damayanti, identification, union, regaining of kingship and conclusion of the story

Vrihadashwaji continues—O Yudhishtir! The Vidarbha king, Bhim welcomed Rituparn, the king of Ayodhya and gave him a grand reception. Rituparn was provided a grand rest-house to stay in. He did not see any sign of Swayamvar in Kundinapura. Bhim was quite unaware of the fact that the king Rituparn had visited there having received any invitation of his daughter's Swayamvar. After enquiring health and well being, he asked—'What was your purpose to come here? Seeing no sign of Swayamvar, Rituparn concealed the fact of invitation and stated in a normal way—'I have come here in a general way only to pay obeisance to you reverently. Bhim began to think that—It does not seem reasonable for anyone to visit anybody without any purpose only to pay obeisance, having made the journey of more than one thousand kilometres. However, the mystery will be revealed later on certainly.' With warm reception and with insistence, Bhim let Rituparn stay at his residence. Bahuk, too, along with Varsnyeya staying in the stable got himself engaged in the service of the horses.

Being restless, Damayanti began to ponder that- 'The sound of the chariot, undoubtedly, seems to be the same as if the sound of my husband's chariot, but he is not visible anywhere, probably, Varsnyeya would have learnt from him the knowledge of chariot that is why the chariot seemed belonging to him. Perhaps, Rituparn also might be

having this knowledge. Having called her maid-servant she said—Keshini! go and find out about the ugly man who he is. It may be possible that he might be my dear husband. You have to repeat the same message before him that I had sent through the Brahmins and hearing his response convey it to me.’ Keshini talked to Bahuk. Bahuk told her the reason of the king’s arrival there and in short got her acquainted with his mastery over cooking and Varsanyeya’s and his own knowledge of horses science. Keshini asked — ‘Bahuk! Where is the king Nal? Do you know? Or does your companion, Varsnyeya know? Bahuk said—‘Keshini! I’ve left the children of the king Nal here. Varsnyeya had got out somewhere. He does not have any information about him. At present the form of the king Nal has changed. He lives hidden in disguised form. Either he himself can recognize or his beloved wife Damayanti, because he does not want to spot out his secret symbols before any other one. Keshini! The king-Nal had been in the grip of adversities. That is why, he abandoned his wife. Damayanti should not be angry with him. At the time, when he was worried about his food, the birds flew away taking his clothes. His heart was distraught with anguish. Undoubtedly, it is right to think that he did not behave properly with his wife, yet, Damayanti should not be wrathful at all considering his adverse condition.’ Just saying this, Nal became in pensive mood. Tears came in his eyes and he began to weep. Coming back to Damayanti, Keshini stated all about the conversation there and also his weeping.

Now, Damayanti’s apprehension got stronger that he

was king-Nal and none else. She said to her maid-servant that—‘Keshini! You, go again to Bahuk and there keep on standing near him without speaking anything. Remain mindful of his activities. If he asks for fire, don’t give him, if he asks for water, make delay. Report me about his each and every activity.’ Keshini went to Bahuk again and having marked his several activities like gods and mankind, came back and began to narrate before Damayanti—‘Princess Bahuk has already attained sway over water, land and fire by all means. I have neither seen nor heard of such a man till now. If there comes upon a low gate, he does not bend, seeing him the door itself goes up and he enters. Even the narrowest hole becomes a cave for him. Whatever the pots were put there for water, just at the casting of his sight, were filled with water. Taking the bundle of straw, he raised it towards the sun and it began to burn. More than this, even the fire does not burn him. The water flows on as per his will. When he starts crushing the flower, instead of withering, they blossom and look fragrant. Seeing these wonderful characteristics, I was taken aback and came to you very hastily.’

Hearing the symptoms and performances of Bahuk, Damayanti came to know and became assured that he (Bahuk) was her husband without the least suspicion. She sent her both the children with Keshini to Nal. Having come to recognize Indrasena and Indrasen, Bahuk came to them and embracing both the children to his bosom got them seated in his lap. Bahuk became restless meeting his offsprings and began to weep. The emotional affectionate

feelings similar to the feelings of a father began to be apparent on his face. Then after, Bahuk handed over both the children to Keshini and said — ‘These children look like my own two children, that is why I burst into tears seeing them. Keshini! by your coming to me again and again, I don’t know what the people would start assuming. So, it is not good for you to come here again and again. you go away.’ Keshini narrated all about the happenings there before Damayanti.

Now Damayanti sent Keshini to her mother and called upon Reverent mother! “I have got Bahuk tested knowing him to be Nal again and again. Now, only doubt about his appearance and feature exists in my mind. Now I, myself want to test him. So, kindly allow Bahuk to come into the palace or permit me to go to him. If you wish, you may or may not convey it to the father.” The queen sought permission from her husband, Bhim and ordered to send for Bahuk in the gynaeceum. Bahuk was called in. Just seeing Damayanti face to face, Nal’s heart was overwhelmed with both grief and distress. He was bathed with tears. Seeing the restlessness of Bahuk, Damayanti too, got grief-stricken. At that time Damayanti was attired in safron cloth. Her hair were matted, her body was gloomy. Damayanti said—‘Bahuk! Some time ago one virtuous person had got out leaving his wife in sleep in the forest. Have you seen him anywhere? At that time woman was extremely tired and unconscious in sleep; Except king of Nishadh—Nal, who could dare abandon such an innocent and faultless lady in a solitary forest? Throughout my life, I have never hurt him knowingly or

assailed him any harm. Yet, he got out leaving me asleep in the forest.' While uttering this, the tears overflowed from Damayanti's eyes. Seeing the drops of tears falling down from her ruddy, big and slightly dark eyes, Nal could not check himself. He began to say. 'Knowingly, neither I have ruined the kingdom nor have I given up you. This is all the mischief of Kaliyug. I know that you have been remembering me and thinking of me day and night since you have been separated from me. Kaliyug used to remain tormented and burning, staying in my body by your curse. Now, I have attained victory over him by penance and my effort and now, the days of our miseries have come to an end. Now, Kaliyug went away leaving my body, I have come here only for you. But now tell me if any other lady can do so as you have become ready to marry with another husband, leaving a favourite and beloved husband like me? Having heard the news of your Swayamvar, the king-Rituparn has reached here so hurriedly.'

Damayanti said with folded hands—Aryaputra! it is not righteous to declare me at fault. You know very well that I have selected you as my husband setting aside the other gods before me. I had sent many Brahmins to search you out and they were wandering all around repeating my instructed words. The Brahmin, named Parnad had reached Ayodhya even up to you. He had narrated my words to you and you had given its proper response also to him. I had made this planning only to call you here after hearing the news about you. I know very well that there is none else on the earth except you to cover the distance of one thousand

kilometers in a single day by chariot pulled on by horses. Touching your feet I take an oath to assure you and tell you the truth that I have never thought of any other man even in my mind. If I have ever done any sinful act, even in thought or mind, may the wind God, continuously moving on the earth, Lord sun and moon-the god of mind destroy my life! All these gods move round the entire earth. I pray them to tell the truth and if I am sinner or of sinful character, then give me up. The very moment the wind uttered from the space—"O the king! I tell you the truth that Damayanti has committed no sin at all. She has kept on retaining her bright chastity and modesty for three years. We have been as her protector and we are witness of her purity. She had sent the message of Swayamvera only to search you out. In fact, Damayanti deserves you and you deserve Damayanti. Accept her." While the wind God was stating this, flowers rained at that moment God's kettle-drum began to sound in the space. Cool, fragrant and mild air began to blow. Seeing such a wonderful sight, the king Nal gave up his suspicion and having wrapped his body with the cloth given by the cobra-Karkotak remembered him. His body at once, turned as before in the usual form. Seeing Nal in his own original appearance, Damayanti clasped him and began to sob. The king Nal, too, hugged Damayanti with love and intertwining both of his children to his bosom, began to converse affectionately with them. The whole night passed away in the conversation with Damayanti.

At the approach of the morning, having taken bath and being dressed up in fine dresses, Damayanti and king Nal

went to Bhim and bowed at his feet reverently. Bhim being delighted, received them very warmly and solaced them. In a moment this news spread everywhere. All the men and women of the city began to observe festival in the joyous mood. The gods were worshipped. When the king Rituparn came to know this fact that it was king Nal in disguised form of Bahuk and arriving here he got united with his wife, he became very happy and he begged for pardon. The king Nal, praised his excellent behaviour and paid him due respect. Besides this, he taught him every skill of horse-science. The king-Rituparn, engaging any other charioteer, departed for his own city.

The king-Nal stayed there in Kundinnagar for a month. Thenafter, by the permission of his father-in-law, Bhim, Nal set out for Nishadh state with a group of a few persons. The king Bhim sent a chariot of white colour, sixteen elephants, fifty horses and six hundred infantry with the King-Nal as an escort. Having entered his city, the king Nal met Pushkar and said to him—‘Either you play the game of deceitful gambling again with me or extend the bow-string.’ Smiling scornfully Pushkar said—‘All right? you got the riches again to play a wager on dices, Well! This time I will win your riches as well as Damayanti, too.’ The king Nal said—‘O brother, gamble with me, why do you jabber? Do you know what will be your condition if you are defeated? The gambling started. In the very first trick the king Nal won the kingdom of Pushkar, the store of gems and even his life. He said to Pushkar—‘This entire state now has come to my possession. Now, you cannot even cast glance at Damayanti.

You are now the servant of Damayanti, O stupid! First time also you had not won me. That was the vicious act of Kaliyug, you are not aware of this. I don't want to level charges of Kaliyug on you. I release you to pass your life happily. My affection to you remains as it is. You are my brother. I will never look with disgust towards you. Remain alive for hundred years.' Saying in this way, the king Nal consoled Pushkar and having embraced him, permitted him to go away. Pushkar bowed with folded hands and said—May your reputation be everlasting in the world and may you live happily for ten thousand years. You are great donor and protector of my life. Pushkar stayed in the city of the king Nal for a month with honour and respect. Then after, with army men, servants and family members Pushkar went away to his own city. The king Nal too, escorting Pushkar to his capital, returned to his capital. All the citizens, common subjects and the cabinet ministers became very happy getting the king Nal again. Being horripilated and with folded hands they requested the king Nal. 'O the great king! We are very happy today having got rid of the sufferings. As the gods serve Lord Indra, we have come here to serve you likewise.'

All the men and women of every house were rejoicing. The peace spread all around. The king. Nal called Damayanti having sent the army. The king Bhim sent his daughter to her father-in-law's house giving her various articles of gift. Damayanti came to the palace with her both the children. The king Nal began to pass his time very happily. The reputation of the king Nal spread far and wide. He began

to nourish his subjects righteously. He worshipped the Almighty God by means of great sacrifices.

Vrihadashwaji continues—‘Yudhishtir! You will also get back your kingship and close relatives in a very short time. Having gambled the king Nal had invited great hardships. He had to suffer himself all alone; but you have your brothers also with you; Draupadi is there and there are many learned persons and the righteous Brahmins with you. In such a condition there is no reason to be grieved. The circumstances of the world do not remain the same always. Thinking so also one should not worry for any loss or gain. The story of Cobra king Karkotak, Damayanti, Nal and Rituparn destroys the sin and vices of Kaliyug by narration or hearing it and the afflicted persons get relief and consolation.

Maxims

1. The union of a noble man with a noble woman is more beneficial.
 2. For a grieved person there is no better friend or better remedy than wife.
 3. Persons never face premature death.
 4. On one side there is chanting and self-study of parts and auxiliary parts of vedas in detail and on the other side mere truthfulness merely, undoubtedly truthfulness is better than that study.
 5. One can not die before or after the appointed time of death even if he wishes to die.
 6. In this world joy or sorrow are determined by God. Nothing happens what is not allotted by God.
 7. In reality, only husband is the best ornament of a woman. In the presence of a husband a woman looks glorious even without ornaments.
 8. All the people have no knowledge of everything. In the world there is none omniscient and only a single man cannot be the storehouse of the entire knowledge.
 9. The ladies of noble and high families protect themselves even in great trouble. By doing so they win over heaven and truth, the both, it is so without any doubt.
 10. The virtuous women never get angry in spite of being abandoned by their husbands. They hold their lives shielded by the armour of good conduct.
 11. All material objects attainable to the human being are evanescent and perishable. Pondering that way you need not worry about their gain or loss.
 12. When the fortune is unfavorable, and effort of man is unfruitful, even at that moment those who take the shelter of Sattava , don't get anguished.
-